

Design preferences and experience of older people's choice in fashion in Hong Kong

The new generations of the older people demonstrate a strong need for better fashion products in recent decades. Meanwhile, the design preferences of older people on fashion clothing change as their physical and socio-psychological characteristics change. Unfortunately, there have been inadequate studies about fashion to understand the needs and preferences of the older people market in terms of gender characteristics in Hong Kong. This study generated invaluable data in understanding the Hong Kong older people aged from 60 to 80 regarding their psychological factors, design preferences and experience of fashion in relation to gender differences. Thus, the design practitioners can apply those findings to create modern older people fashion so as to meet the ever-changing market needs.

Keywords: older people; design preferences; experience; fashion; gender

1. Introduction

The needs of older people fashion clothing have been neglected although economical and social developments lead to the production of ready-to-wear garment having a wide range of specialties. Inadequate quality and non-availability of certain styles and sizes are two main issues for elderly fashion clothing (Civitci 2004). The mainstream clothing market in Hong Kong is generally ignorant of the clothing needs of the older people who view fashion differently from their previous generations and have their unique design preferences of older people fashion. Recent studies have suggested that older people fashion market should not be neglected (Tiggemann 2004; Li 2003; Civitci 2004). Today's older people are active, appearance-conscious and are willing to consume (Solomon and Rabolt 2004). Although considerable works have been carried out in western countries, the findings are generally not applicable to the Hong Kong older people due to significant differences in culture, lifestyle and climate. Thus, there

is a need to conduct a localised study to offer better understanding about design preferences and experience of older people choosing fashion in Hong Kong.

This project aims to examine older males' and females' psychological dimensions in terms of fashion involvement and clothing needs, design preferences, views and experience of older people choosing fashion in Hong Kong. The specific objectives are as follows:

- to investigate the design preferences, and views and experience of older people aged from 60 to 80 in Hong Kong;
- to identify needs of older people choosing fashion in terms of psychological factors;
- to examine gender differences regarding older people's design preferences, views and experience choosing fashion; and
- to examine the relationship between psychological factors and design preferences, and between psychological factors, and views and experience of older people choosing fashion.

2. Aging problem in Hong Kong

Aging population is a worldwide phenomenon in developed nations, which raises inevitable issues in various aspects such as the sociological and medical factors.

According to Chinese tradition, a person is considered old when he or she reaches the age of 60 (Chow and Chi 1997). Owing to growing life expectancy and declining mortality rate, a fast growing rate in old people population was recorded, while this trend is predicted to continue in the future. The number of older people increased at an average annual growth rate of 5.1% from 1961 to 2006 and there were 852,796 older people in Hong Kong in 2006, and the proportion of older people in the total population

rose continuously over the past 45 years from 2.8% in 1961 to 12.4% in 2006 (Census and Statistics Department 2006). It is expected to rise to 20.4% in 2025 from 10.6% in 2000 based on the report regarding national policies and programs on ageing in Asia and the Pacific conducted by United Nations (2002). In the most recent study of worldwide average lifespan conducted by Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare of Japan (2011), the life spans of men and women in Hong Kong were recorded as 80 and 85.9 respectively, which are the highest and second highest in the world respectively. Thus, there is a tremendous growth of needs in terms of both quantity and quality regarding older fashion clothing nowadays due to the aging population.

3. Modern older people

Aging is a developmental period characterised by restructuring the relationship between the older people and the social structure, which involves a redefinition of the self and changes in self-perception (Jackson and O'Neal 1994). Older people are now more fashion-conscious about dressing better to maintain their self-image for new social connection. It was also found that older women increasingly care about clothing and other appearance management behaviour as a means of secondary or cognitive control of the inevitable and largely uncontrollable ageing-related changes in the body (Tiggemann 2004). Stereotypes about older people being impoverished and unconcerned with appearance are challenged by recent studies. For example, Li (2003) suggested that designers should remove their stereotypical ideas of older consumers and offer more choices of better quality products to meet the ageing population's psychological need for expressing individual style and taste.

A world leading online trend forecasting, analysis and research service provider, WGSN stated that one of the major groups of older people born after 1946 is more fashion-conscious and willing to spend than past generations, and they are a very

appealing group, of whom about 49% confess they still love and enjoy shopping (WGSN 2008). Comparing to women aged between 30 and 42, 45% of them said they like or love to shop, and go out shopping 1.9 times a month (WGSN 2007a). As older people, they realised that they have purchasing power, but are being ignored (WGSN 2007b).

4. Needs of fashion for older people

The needs of fashion for older people have expanded in terms of quantity and quality. Clothing for older people had to be taken into consideration to expand in terms of quantity because of the growth of aging population (Civitci 2004). The aging population expressed high demand of fashion for older people, which is expected to be strengthened in the future 20 years because of the growing population of older people. In terms of quality, the older people nowadays are demanding better clothes in terms of aesthetics and fitting concerns.

For clothing choices in old age, there is a complex interplay between physiological and cultural influences (Twigg 2007). Civitci (2004) conducted a study of ergonomic garment design for the Turkish elderly men. It was proposed that the aims of developing garment forms for the older people are focusing both of the functional and psycho-sociological values which comprise protection, relaxation and designs. Tiggemann and Lacey (2009) suggested that clothing for older people is used as an appearance-management technique to deal with ageing body figure while older women might be expected to use clothing more for both concealment and self-enhancement purposes, in order to dress younger. Appearance is suggested as very important as it is related to the self-esteem and confidence of the older people (Kaiser 1983; Huck and Bunhotal 1997). Apter (1995) reported that as women get older, they experience the influences of cultural ideals on self-perception that women may begin to construct a

new identity and challenge existing notions of beauty and attractiveness. Schofield et al. (2006) suggested that fitting well was the priority for women aged over 55 years who have the desire and ability to spend money on themselves.

5. Design preferences

Chowdhary (1988), and Spruiell and Jernigan (1982) found that both older men and women like stylish clothing that fit them well, made them feel well-dressed and look up-to-date. Fit and price are suggested as the most important attributes for older people's garment purchases (WGSN 2008). Holmlund et al. (2011) proposed that older women prefer good quality fabric, good finishing, loose and comfortable fit, elastic band in waistline, suitability for their body shape, natural fibers, elasticity, and breathable fabrics. Siu and Fan's (1999) investigation regarding clothing preferences of elderly women in comparison with young females in Hong Kong showed that the clothing preferences of Hong Kong older females are very different from those of western older females and of the Hong Kong youths because the older people are much more concerned with price, fabric, comfort, and colour of the clothing. Also, unlike the western older females who prefer skirts and dresses, it was found that Hong Kong older females like to wear blouses and trousers. Good fit is extensively considered as an important factor for older people in the study (Siu and Fan, 1999). Civitci (2004) investigated the needs of older men's fashion clothing and suggested that appearance and proper fit are important to their self-confidence while fabric, colour, accessories are dimensions to please users. To achieve better fit, compensating behaviour like altering garments, having clothing custom-fitted, or choosing aesthetically pleasing apparel to maintain or improve body image are preferred by older women (Jackson and O'Neal 1994).

Colour attractiveness or preferences are aroused from gender, age and personality (Kauppinen-Raisanen and Luomala 2010). Colour is suggested as the most important attribute for older people when choosing or purchasing clothes and it has a pronounced role for them than it did when they were younger. For example, it was suggested that older women have their own favourite colours based on the fashion trend (Holmlund et al. 2011). Lurie (1992) studied colour preferences of the older people, and found that they prefer muted, dull and soft colours like beige, grey, lilac and navy-blue while Iltanen (2005) suggested that muted colours and black are choices for women aged in the 50s. Twigg (2007) addressed the general practice of ‘toning down’ by the adoption of dull, neutral colours in old age, so as to avoid being too eye-catching.

Preferences for fit and comfort were suggested as more important than fashionability for the older people (Nam et al. 2007). Tiggemann and Lacey (2009) also expressed the importance of clothing to older women with a few significant correlations between age and clothing functions; older women chose clothes more for comfort than younger women while assurance, fashion, and individuality were also other major clothing functions. Nam et al. (2007) indicated several comfort factors attracting apparel purchases from older women, which are ‘good fit with adequate ease’; ‘soft, non-abrasive materials’; ‘adequate insulation or ventilation’; and ‘garment lengths and fullness that facilitate free and uninhibited movements’. To offer comfort, fabric selection is very important to the wearer by allowing easy dressing and undressing. For example, lycra-cotton could offer smooth, elastic and porous surface, and older men preferred natural fabrics (Civitci 2004).

6. Psychological factors of older people

Belonging, social acceptance, self-regard and self-actualisation are crucial psychological needs for older people that ‘the more psychologically close clothing is to

the self, the more one may expect the older person to rely on the usefulness of this resource for need satisfaction' (Lee and Suzanne 2010, p.443). Jackson and O'Neal (1994) reviewed and analysed 29 US research publications on this topic between 1944 and 1988 and found that there are three distinct types of older female consumers: The first group is characterised by significant physical impairments preferring clothing that provides comfort and other self-help features; the second group is characterised by the perception of changes in body proportion and the concern about having styles available for selection while the third group is characterised by changes in attitude towards fashion and the preference to have alterations of ready-to-wear or custom-tailored designs.

7. Gender differences

Many studies about fashion or clothing for older people only targeted women subjects. Studies of men's fashion are generally lacking while studies of older men are even more limited, because fashion and clothing were culturally constituted as feminised. However, gradually more studies about menswear clothing or modern masculinity suggested that men should be studied as a part of fashion (Edwards 1997; Twigg 2007). Modern men in all ages are now more interested in fashion, and studies about menswear should be viewed in a more positive light as womenswear does (Davies 2008).

Despite the existence of gender differences of fashion clothing in all ages, contemporary women are still believed to have more fashion consciousness, engagement and higher involvement than men with fashion at every level (Twigg 2007). In addition, designs of men's fashion are still based on utilitarian, need-based reasons while women's fashion reflects a psychological and want-based approach (Workman and Studak 2006). Owing to the different psychological orientations in fashion, gender differences on various design preferences were examined in previous research. For

example, gender factor regarding colour preferences has been extensively discussed (Dittmar 2001; Wijk et al. 2002) and is suggested as a controversial topic in a recent study (Gong 2010).

8. Method

In this quantitative study, variables regarding psychological dimensions, design preferences, views and experience of the Hong Kong older people choosing fashion were obtained through a self-administered questionnaire to the older males and females aged between 60 and 80. It was suggested that quantitative studies are especially favorable in assessing influencing factors and design preferences of older people (Lee and Suzanne 2010).

With regard to psychological factors, items related to psychological dimensions in terms of fashion involvement and clothing needs of older people choosing fashion were adopted for factor analysis. For design preferences, the uses of colour, material and styles were examined; preferences of colour and material were examined by demonstrating various fabric swatches and colour cardboards to respondents; and for the views and experience of older people choosing fashion, subjects' satisfaction with ready-to-wear in the older people fashion market and perception in clothing comfort and experience of older people were investigated.

Likert scaling was adopted for various items of the survey. The scale of 1 for strongly disagree and 5 for strongly agree was adopted for the items about psychological dimensions (motivations in terms of respondents' involvement and clothing functions) and experience of older people choosing fashion; the scale of 1 for least important and to 5 for strongly important was for the perception of clothing comfort, and the scale of 1 for least preferred and 5 for most preferred was used to examine the design preferences such as, material, colour, styles, of the subjects.

8.1. *Data collection*

A self-administered questionnaire survey had been carried out in person for three months. Respondents were male and female older people aged from 60 to 80 living in Hong Kong and they were still active in socialization. All of the respondents were students of the Mini-U for the Third Age Programme offered by the Hong Kong Polytechnic University. The aim of the programme was to enable older people to pursue lifelong learning in a university setting. A total of 160 elderly, 100 females and 60 males aged from 60 to 80 were invited to complete the self-administered questionnaire survey (N=160) regarding psychological dimensions, design preferences, views and experience of choosing fashion. Males at this age were more reluctant to participate, and only 60 elderly men were finally invited.

8.2. *Data analysis*

The software package SPSS 16.0 was employed to facilitate data analysis. The exploratory factor analysis using principal axis factor analysis followed by varimax rotations, descriptive analyses, Mann-Whitney U test for comparisons across gender and Spearman correlation analysis were adopted. In this study, 9 statements related to psychological dimensions in older people choosing fashion were included. By adopting factor analysis, male and female subjects' psychological characteristics in choosing fashion were identified, which created various psychological components (three components for male respondents and two for female respondents). The factor scores obtained after factor analysis were used for correlation analyses against items about design preferences, views and experience of older people choosing fashion. In order to ensure a reliable analysis, Cronbach Alpha reliability test was adopted to analyse the inter-item consistency. For all 53 items found in the survey, an acceptable level (alpha >.70) of inter-item reliability of inter-item consistency was obtained.

9. Results

9.1. *Psychological dimensions of older people choosing fashion*

In the survey, respondents were asked about their psychological dimensions of choosing fashion with eight items in terms of fashion involvement and clothing needs.

Respondents were asked to show their agreement with eight statements; which were reviewed in previous studies about fashion for older people: 'I am fashion conscious' (Holmlund et al. 2011); 'I buy clothing regularly' (Solomon and Rabolt 2004); 'I enjoy buying clothes' (Nam et al. 2007; Howarton and Lee 2010); 'wearing chic could enhance self image and personal attractiveness' (Jackson and O'Neal 1994); 'I would buy clothes for participating in different occasions' (Auty and Elliott 1998; Tiggemann and Lacey 2009); 'I care about appearance' (Civitci 2004); 'appearance is associated with self-confidence' (Civitci 2004); and 'I prefer to dress to make myself younger' (Holmlund et al. 2011; Nam et al. 2007). Factor analysis regarding psychological dimensions of older people choosing fashion allows simplifying subjects' concerns into various factor components for further studies in relation to their design preferences, views and experience.

Principal axis factor analysis of psychological dimensions of older people choosing fashion was separately conducted for male (n= 60) and female subjects (n=100) and the results are contained in Tables 1 and Table 2, respectively. For male subjects, there were three factors conducted: 1) *enhancement function*, 2) *involvement interest* and 3) *fashion & appearance conscious* (see Table 1). Factor 1, *enhancement function*, included items related to enhance self-image, personal attractiveness and self confidence by wearing chic and improving appearance. Factor 2, *involvement interest*, is associated with fashion involvement; for example, 'I buy clothing regularly', 'I enjoy buying clothes' and 'I would buy clothes for participating in different occasions'. Factor 3, *fashion & appearance conscious*, included items such as 'I am fashion conscious'

and 'I care about appearance'. The total variance explained by the three factors with eigenvalues greater than 1 was 68.1%.

For female subjects, two factors were conducted: 1) *enhancement function and 2) involvement interest* (see Table 2). The major items for factor 1, *enhancement function*, included 'wearing chic could enhance my self-image and personal attractiveness', 'appearance is associated with my self confidence' and 'I am fashion conscious'. Factor 2, *involvement interest*, is related to fashion involvement: 'I buy clothing regularly', 'I would buy clothes for participating in different occasions', 'I prefer to dress to make myself younger' and 'I enjoy buying clothes'. The total variance explained by the two factors with eigenvalues greater than 1 was 57.7%.

9.2 Design preferences of older people choosing fashion

For each design preference such as, material, colour and style, the means and standard deviation were computed (see Table 3), while Mann-Whitney U test was used to examine the presence of significant gender difference regarding design preferences. To examine the relationship between each category of design preferences and various psychological factors, spearman correlation analysis was adopted.

9.2.1. Colour preferences

By Mann-Whitney U test, significant differences were found in preferences of colours across gender. Males showed different preferences in warm colours, pastel colors, red, black, blue, white, yellow and beige from female subjects. In particular, males showed significantly lower preference ratings in pastel colours, red, yellow and beige than females that males had higher preference ratings in black, blue and white. Subtle colours of white, black, gray and blue were found to be preferred by male subjects, whereas some bright or vibrant colours like red, yellow and beige were preferred by

females. Regarding the relationship against psychological factors, green was suggested to be correlated against one of the males' psychological factors, *fashion & appearance conscious* ($r = .319, p < .05$). For female subjects, warm colours ($r = .204, p < .05$), cold colours ($r = .213, p < .034$) and pastel colours ($r = .371, p < .00$) were found to be correlated against *enhancement function*.

9.2.2. *Material preferences*

Respondents were required to rate on their preferences towards various materials (i.e. wool, cotton, leather, man-made fiber like polyester and lycra-cotton) and material structures (i.e. woven and knitted fabric) in the survey. The two most preferred materials were the uses of cotton and lycra-cotton because they are perceived as comfortable, practical, breathable and easy to care for (Howarton and Lee 2010), while the use of leather was suggested as the least preferred material. Respondents showed similar preferences towards the uses of woven and knitted fabric. Preferences with significant gender differences were found in the use of leather and man-made fiber and males showed significantly higher preferences in both uses. Besides, the psychological factor of females, *enhancement function*, was found to be correlated against the use of cotton ($r = .299, p < .01$), lycra-cotton ($r = .227, p < .05$) and woven fabric ($r = .247, p < .05$). Another factor, *involvement interest*, was suggested to be correlated with the use of wool ($r = -.198, p < .05$) and cotton ($r = .254, p < .05$). The only correlation found between males' psychological factors and material preferences was obtained between the use of woven material and the factor of *fashion & appearance conscious* ($r = .263, p < .05$).

9.2.3. *Style preferences*

Only females were asked to rate on the preferences of blouse, dress and skirt among preferences of various styles (i.e. blouse, dress, shirt, T-shirt, skirt and trousers). No gender difference was found in the preferences of shirt, T-shirt and trousers. The mean ratings showed that females' preferences of various styles were higher than neutral of '3' except for those of dress and skirt; remarkably low preference ratings were obtained with regard to the preferences of dress and skirt (i.e. $M = 1.32$ and 1.24 respectively). Several significant correlations between females' psychological factors and various style preferences were suggested. Blouse ($r = .318$, $p < .001$), dress ($r = .303$, $p < .01$), T-shirt ($r = .414$, $p < .001$) and trousers ($r = .485$, $p < .001$) were found to be correlated against the *enhancement function* while skirt ($r = .266$, $p < .01$) and trousers ($r = .228$, $p < .05$) were correlated against *involvement interest*.

9.3. *Views and Experience*

Regarding views and experience of older fashion, the mean, standard deviation and the results of Mann-Whitney U test are shown in Table 4.

9.3.1. *Satisfaction with ready-to-wear in older fashion market*

Subjects were asked to express their satisfaction with ready-to-wear in the fashion market for older people in terms of various aspects, which included fit, silhouette, colour, design details, trendiness and care. According to the mean ratings obtained, colour and care were the two most satisfied aspects, whereas trendiness and fitting are the least satisfied and second least satisfied aspects for both male and female subjects, respectively. Results of spearman correlation analysis indicated significant correlations between males and females' psychological factors and their satisfaction with several aspects of fashion for older people in the market. For males, silhouette ($r = .394$, $p < .01$),

colour ($r = .384$, $p < .01$), design details ($r = .253$, $p < .05$) and trend ($r = .396$, $p < .01$) were found to be correlated with *enhancement function*; fit ($r = .439$, $p < .001$), silhouette ($r = .270$, $p < .05$), trend ($r = .314$, $p < .05$) and care ($r = .326$, $p < .01$) were correlated with *fashion and image conscious*. *Enhancement function*, one of the females' psychological factors, was suggested to be correlated against satisfaction with several aspects of older people choosing fashion, including colour ($r = .342$, $p < .001$), trend ($r = .216$, $p < .05$) and care ($r = .244$, $p < .05$). In particular, colour ($r = .210$, $p < .05$) was also found to be correlated against another females' psychological factor, *involvement interest*.

9.3.2. Perception in older clothing comfort

Subjects were required to express their preferred importance of various items regarding perception in clothing comfort. Several items of comfort factors attracting apparel purchases indicated by Nam et al (2007) including 'good fit with adequate ease', 'soft, non-abrasive materials', 'adequate insulation or ventilation', 'garment fullness that facilitates free uninhibited movements', and 'ease of dressing' were examined in the survey. Significant gender differences were found in three items (i.e. 'good fit with adequate ease', 'garment fullness that facilitates free, uninhibited movements', and 'ease of dressing'). Higher mean ratings were found in males, indicating that clothing comfort was preferred by elderly men. For females, 'good fit with adequate ease' ($r = .455$, $p < .001$), 'soft, non-abrasive materials' ($r = .372$, $p < .001$) and 'adequate insulation or ventilation' ($r = .247$, $p < .05$) were found to be correlated against the *enhancement function* while 'soft, non-abrasive materials' ($r = .242$, $p < .05$) and 'ease of dressing' ($r = .279$, $p < .01$) were correlated against *involvement interest*.

9.3.3 *Experience of older people choosing fashion*

The mean rating of the statements concerning the experience of fashion for older people in the market was around 3 (i.e. neutral). It is worth noting that subjects showed disagreement with the statement that 'they experienced difficulties when they were putting on the clothes', but they tended to agree that 'there is a need to create a new size specification for elderly fashion'. Significant gender differences were reported; females agreed more with the statements of 'I have difficulties in buying clothes because of changing' and 'there is a need to create a new size specification for elderly fashion'.

9.3.4. *Fashion and image conscious*

One of the males' psychological factor was suggested to be correlated with the items about experience with clothing for older people, 'I would give up preferred styles for more generous cut with comfort' ($r = -.337, p < .01$), 'I have difficulties in buying clothes because of changing body structure' ($r = -.327, p < .01$) and 'I experienced difficulties when putting on the clothes' ($r = -.377, p < .01$). Another significant correlation was found between the item 'I have a wide range of choices when buying clothes' and the *enhancement function* of males ($r = .288, p < .05$). No significant correlation was found between females' psychological factors and their experience of elderly people choosing fashion.

10. **Discussion and conclusion**

Comparing the results of factor analysis across gender, the major difference is *that fashion and appearance conscious function* stood out as a major factor for males whereas the statements included in *fashion and appearance conscious function* of elderly males were included as part of the two other factors for females (i.e. *enhancement function* and *involvement interest*). Older male subjects showed a more

distinctive profile in various factors; it seems that their psychological dimensions of elderly fashion are based on distinguishing purposes. Some older males look for enhancement; some for involvement while some are mainly concerned about fashion and image. Elderly females, however, tend to look for multiple functions in fashion. Items like 'I care about appearance' and 'I enjoy when buying clothes' were shared by the two factors (i.e. *enhancement function* and *involvement interest*) with similar factor loadings.

Significant gender differences were found with regard to colour preferences. Older men had a significantly lower preference for some eye-catching vibrant colours whereas subtle colours like black, white and blue were significantly welcomed by elderly men. This study reported different results regarding older women's colour preferences against the studies of Lurie (1992), Iltanen (2005) and Twigg (2007) that dull colours and black were not preferred by older women respondents. They did not worry about being eye-catching as they preferred red and warm colours over dull colours like black and white. Gender differences were also significantly found in the perception of clothing comfort and experience of older fashion; men rated significantly higher on three statements out of four: 'good fit with adequate ease'; 'garment fullness that facilitates free, uninhibited movements'; and 'ease of dressing', reflecting that elderly males are concerned more about comfort in elderly fashion than women do.

Regarding experience of elderly people choosing fashion, it was found that elderly women had significantly more difficulties in buying clothes because of changing body figure while they experienced a stronger need for a new size specification for elderly fashion than elderly men.

In this study, the relationship between psychological factors against design preferences and views, experiences of older people choosing fashion is conceivably

established with support of significant correlations found. Different psychological orientations towards older people choosing fashion were related to particular design preferences. For example, extensive correlations were found between *enhancement function* against design preferences (i.e. warm colours, pastel colours, the use of cotton, lycra-cotton and woven fabric and styles of blouse, dress, T-shirt and trousers), and views and experience of older people choosing fashion (i.e. satisfaction with ready-to-wear in the market in terms of colour, trend and care; various perceptions of older clothing comfort and experience of older women choosing fashion). Additionally, *enhancement function* was positively related to the preferences of tops and bottoms included blouse, dress, T-shirt and trousers, whereas *involvement interest* was just positively related to bottoms (i.e. skirt and trousers). And for satisfaction with ready-to-wear in fashion market for older people, significant correlation was found against psychological factors, *enhancement function and fashion & image conscious* of older men. Men's *enhancement function* was found to be negatively correlated against statements such as 'I would give up preferred styles for more generous cut with comfort'; 'I have difficulties in buying clothes because of changing body structure'; and 'I experienced difficulties when putting on the clothes'. This implies that if one is concerned more about *enhancement function*, he tends to be less willing to give up preferred styles for more generous cut with comfort, has less difficulties in buying clothes because of changing body structure and when putting on clothes.

11. Further studies

This study offers understandings on psychological factors, design preferences, views and experience of older people choosing fashion in Hong Kong, which contribute to knowledge in various areas like gender differences in psychology of older people, and various design preferences (i.e. colour preferences). However, design preferences might

not only depend on or be related to psychological dimensions, but also physical factors (i.e. body measurement like BMI and WHR). Physical factors and their relationships with design preferences or experience of older people choosing fashion might be another area for future investigations. Further investigation on the comparison or interplay between physical and psychological factors with regard to design preferences might offer complete understanding on design preferences of older people choosing fashion. Lastly as Nam et al. (2007) suggested that continuous re-sampling and reassessment of the older people is essential to maintain understanding of fashion for older people, in order to meet the ever-changing market.

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Table 1. Factor analysis: Psychological dimensions in fashion for older males.

Factors, Statements	Factor loadings
<i>Factor 1, Enhancement Function</i>	
I like to wear chic to enhance self-image and personal attractiveness.	.924
My appearance is associated with self-confidence.	.953
I prefer to dress to make myself younger.	.436
I am fashion conscious.	.337
<i>Factor 2, Involvement Interest</i>	
I buy clothing regularly.	.864
I enjoy buying clothes.	.661
I would buy clothes for participating in different occasions.	.657
I prefer to dress to make myself younger.	.394
I am fashion conscious.	.377
<i>Factor 3, Fashion & Appearance Conscious</i>	
I care about appearance.	.938
I am fashion conscious.	.634

Table 2. Factor analysis: Psychological dimensions in fashion for older females.

Factors, Statements	Factor loadings
<i>Factor 1, Enhancement Function</i>	
I like to wear chic to enhance self-image and personal attractiveness.	.902
My appearance is associated with self-confidence.	.887
I am fashion conscious.	.588
I care about appearance.	.493
I enjoy buying clothes.	.460
<i>Factor 2, Involvement Interest</i>	
I would buy clothes for participating in different occasions.	.739
I buy clothing regularly.	.710
I prefer to dress to make myself younger.	.653
I enjoy buying clothes.	.591
I care about appearance.	.481

Table 3. Mean scores of design preferences and gender differences.

Design Preferences	Mean		Std. dev.		Mann-Whitney U test (Gender Difference)
	Males	Females	Males	Females	
Colour Preferences					
Warm colors	3.39	3.79	.690	.795	Significant (.001)
Cold colours	3.77	3.64	.496	.718	Insignificant
Light colours	3.49	3.68	.809	.815	Insignificant
Dark colours	3.52	3.44	.766	.978	Insignificant
Pastel colours	1.79	2.93	.915	1.027	Significant (.000)
Red	2.08	3.41	1.229	1.190	Significant (.000)
Gray	3.66	3.42	.929	1.027	Insignificant
Black	3.46	2.96	1.205	1.377	Significant (.025)
Blue	3.85	3.34	.792	.945	Significant (.001)
White	3.56	3.06	1.025	1.301	Significant (.029)
Yellow	2.21	2.78	1.185	1.284	Significant (.006)
Beige	3.20	3.65	.910	.869	Significant (0.001)
Green	2.79	2.81	1.142	1.187	Insignificant
Material Preferences					
Wool	3.23	3.20	1.023	1.137	Insignificant
Cotton	4.13	4.22	.386	.504	Insignificant
Leather	1.90	1.44	.943	.820	Significant (.00)
Man-made fiber	3.26	2.82	.929	1.140	Significant (0.016)
Lycra-cotton	4.03	4.12	.446	.456	Insignificant
Woven fabric	3.90	3.91	.436	.379	Insignificant
Knitted Fabric	3.87	3.91	.695	.452	Insignificant
Style Preferences					
Blouse	-----	3.52	-----	.674	-----
Dress	-----	1.32	-----	.875	-----
Shirt	3.36	3.20	.731	.787	Insignificant
T-shirt	3.43	3.59	.903	.902	Insignificant
Skirt	-----	1.24	-----	.754	-----
Trousers	3.64	3.71	.578	.762	Insignificant

Table 4. Mean scores of views and experience of fashion for older people and gender differences.

Views & Experience	Mean		Std. dev.		Mann-Whitney U test (Gender Difference)
	Males	Females	Males	Females	
Satisfaction with ready-to-wear in older people fashion market					
Fit (cutting)	3.33	3.18	.625	.821	Insignificant
Silhouette	3.44	3.40	.646	.651	Insignificant
Colour	3.69	3.86	.564	.752	Insignificant
Design details	3.25	3.32	.537	.584	Insignificant
Trendiness	3.07	3.26	.602	.676	Insignificant
Care	3.77	3.69	.529	.563	Insignificant
Perception in clothing comfort					
Good fit with adequate ease	3.82	2.96	.466	1.377	Significant (.008)
Soft, non-abrasive materials	3.77	3.34	.716	.945	Insignificant
Adequate insulation or ventilation (depending upon the season)	3.49	3.06	.788	1.301	Insignificant
Garment fullness that facilitates free, uninhibited movements	3.72	2.78	.819	1.284	Significant (.044)
Ease of dressing	3.93	3.65	.359	.869	Significant (0.05)
Experience of fashion for older people					
I would give up preferred styles for more generous cut with comfort.	2.95	2.89	.669	.840	Insignificant
Ready-to-wear cannot suit me well as I get older.	3.15	3.36	.654	.860	Insignificant
I have difficulties in buying clothes because of changing body structure.	3.02	3.24	.741	.754	Significant (0.47)
I experienced difficulties when putting on the clothes.	2.66	2.81	.629	.800	Insignificant
There is a need to create a new size specification for elderly fashion.	3.30	3.78	.641	.773	Significant (0.00)
I have altered new clothes for better fitting.	3.30	3.16	.803	1.061	Insignificant
I have difficulties in finding stylish and comfortably fitting garments.	2.97	3.14	.632	.779	Insignificant
I have a wide range of choices when buying clothes.	3.00	3.15	.913	.936	Insignificant